DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 686 FL 800 822

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TITLE Instruction and Assessment for Limited-English-Proficient Adult Learners.
INSTITUTION National Center on Adult Literacy, Philadelphia, PA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO NCAL-TR94-06
PUB DATE Jun 94
CONTRACT R117Q0003
NOTE 33p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; Cultural Background; *Daily Living Skills; Educational Needs; Educational Objectives; Educational Strategies; *English (Second Language); Evaluation Methods; Instructional Improvement; *Language Processing; Limited English Speaking; *Literacy Education; Second Language Learning; Skill Development; Speech Skills; Student Evaluation; Thinking Skills; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Biliteracy

ABSTRACT

The report and review of literature discusses instructional and assessment practices associated with limited-English-proficient (LEP) adults, and recommends that literacy providers use alternative forms of instruction and assessment for this population that are based on: (1) an explicit emphasis on writing; (2) use of the learner's own cultural experiences; and (3) the teaching of cognitive skills and their relationship to real-life text-processing demands. The confusion surrounding English oral proficiency and English literacy is examined, as is the role that native language literacy plays in development and subsequent acquisition of the second (i.e., English) language. It is concluded that by teaching for and emphasizing literacy rather than oral language proficiency, LEP adults are aided in coping better with ever-increasing literacy demands of society. An appended table illustrates a recommended instructional approach to dual (native language/English) literacy development. Contains 64 references. (Author/MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT FOR LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT ADULT LEARNERS

Ronald W. Solórzano
Occidental College

NCAL TECHNICAL REPORT TR94–06
JUNE 1994

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This work was supported by funding from the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania, which is part of the Education Research and Development Center Program (Grant No. R117Q0003) as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, in cooperation with the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services. The findings and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the National Center on Adult Literacy, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, or the U.S. Department of Education.

APPENDIX A

Table 1

LEP Biliteracy Instructional Sequence

Literacy Proficiency	Native Language Proficiency		English Language Proficiency		
	Low Intermediate (1)	High Intermediate (2)	Beginning (3)	Low Intermediate (4)	High Intermediate & Advanced (5)
Language Objective	Provide initial literacy skills in native language	Develop native language academic skills to some predetermined threshold level	Social Interaction	Initial literacy	Academic language skills
Instructional Approach	Language Experience: Native Language	Cognitive instruction in native language & English listening activities using TPR	Communicative	Language Experience	Cognitive and content-based
Adapted from Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares (1985)					

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INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT FOR LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT ADULT LEARNERS

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Abstract

This report discusses instructional and assessment practices associated with limited-English-proficient (LEP) adults and recommends that literacy providers use alternative forms of instruction and assessment for LEP adults that are based on (a) an explicit emphasis on writing, (b) the use of the learner's cultural experiences, and (c) the teaching of cognitive skills and their relationship to real-life text-processing demands. The confusion surrounding English oral proficiency and English literacy is examined as is the role that native language literacy plays in the development and subsequent acquisition of the second (i.e., English) language. By teaching for and emphasizing literacy rather than oral language proficiency, LEP adults are shown to be better able to cope with the ever increasing literacy demands of society.

INTRODUCTION

There is a literacy crisis in America created by changing literacy demands and the increase in global competition for goods and services. The National Adult Literacy Survey (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993) reported that nearly half (approximately 90 million) of America's adults (16 years and older) perform at relatively low literacy levels. At these levels, adults can be expected to perform only simple routine tasks involving uncomplicated texts and documents or make low-level inferences using printed materials. In another national study, *Beyond the School Doors*, Kirsch, Jungeblut, and Campbell (1992) found that a substantial number of workers and job seekers had minimal literacy skills associated with these lower levels. Concern about our nation's educational and workforce future have prompted the National Governors Association to propose a challenge for the year 2000 that includes literacy for every American adult.

As literacy providers explore ways to improve the literacy levels of English-speaking adults, a growing segment of the adult population remains in a precarious situation. Impacted by a growing anti-immigrant sentiment, a competition for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instructional dollars, and an unclear understanding of their literacy levels, non-English-speaking adults enter the literacy arena. When literacy (illiteracy) figures are mentioned, it is not clear how the limited-English-proficient (LEP) adult factors in, since these literacy figures represent English literacy. Similarly, it is not clear which literacy resources or strategies LEP adults bring to the instructional setting, which thus affects educational planning.

Because of these factors, much of the educational prescription for limited- and non-English-speaking adults centers on rapid English language acquisition and citizenship. It is clear, however, that LEP adults represent a heterogeneous group. They arrive in the United States with varying experiences and diverse educational and economic levels. Nonetheless, instruction and assessment has centered around oral English language fluency with little, if any, consideration for their native language literacy levels.

This report discusses past instructional and assessment practices and recommends that literacy providers use alternative forms of instruction and assessment based on an explicit emphasis on writing and the use of learners' cultural experiences as well as on the teaching of cognitive skills and their relationship to real-life text-processing demands.

The teaching of cognitive skills and related issues are discussed in this report relative to the broader topic of the quality of instruction for LEP adults. Writing is examined relative to its capability for including the cultural experiences of the learner and in terms of broadening LEP adults' writing perspectives by teaching them the various purposes of writing. Although presented separately for purposes of this paper, cognitive skills instruction and writing complement each other.

The first topic examines the nature and quality of instruction for LEP adults, which seems to mirror the general perception of literacy and the confusion surrounding English oral proficiency and English literacy. Adding to the confusion of quality instruction is a lack of understanding of the role

that native language literacy plays in the development and subsequent acquisition of the second (i.e., English) language. Finally, the lack of congruence between instruction and assessment further exacerbates the problem for this group of learners.

The second topic discussed concerns the need to include writing and cultural experiences in the curriculum. Literacy instruction and progress is usually measured in terms of reading or oral language production, whether it be reading grade levels or scores on reading/language tests that include vocabulary, phonics, and/or comprehension. For adult LEP learners, writing takes a back seat to oral language instruction and, if offered, beginning English reading. Furthermore, the culture and background experiences of LEP adults, while potential resources for instruction, are rarely included in the curriculum. If a more cognitive-demanding curriculum (in both native and second language) that includes an emphasis on writing can be implemented, LEP adults will have a far better chance of becoming literate—in two languages.

These concerns are important for the instruction and assessment of LEP adults, especially in light of the current demographic changes taking place in America and their effect on literacy providers. These changes are discussed below.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

INCREASE IN NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Several national and worldwide changes are taking place as the United States enters the twenty-first century. For example, the face of America is changing. As Bryant (1991; quoted in Kirsch et al., 1993) reports: "If you gave America a face in 1990, it would have shown the first signs of wrinkles [and] it would have been full of color." Kirsch et al. (1993) further point out that 32 million individuals in the United States speak a language other than English, from Spanish and Chinese to Yupik and Mon-Khmer.

Data show that the non-English-speaking population in the United States is growing and represents sizable numbers. Of the 31.8 million Americans (14% of the total American population) who speak a language other than English, 17 million (54%) speak Spanish. This represents an increase of over 6 million since 1980 (Macías, 1993; U. S. Department of Commerce, 1990). Spanish is the prevailing non-English language spoken in 39 states. Our country may not be realizing the literacy potential of a major segment of our society unless we examine the native language literacy levels and resources of that group.

Internationally, America is opening its doors through trade agreements (e.g., NAFTA) that will encourage the business community to interact with growing numbers of non-English-speaking clientele. This business climate

coupled with continued immigration will increase our interaction with non-English-speaking persons in the classroom as well as in the business world.

ESL Adult Enrollments Increasing

The impact on instruction is clear. A publication of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (1991) describes the changing enrollments in federally funded programs. The report states that ESL enrollments have increased dramatically in 1989 to 34% of the total adult education enrollment, up from only 19% in 1980.

Nowhere is this increase more evident than in California, where a study by SRA Associates (1987) found that 79% of the almost 600,000 students in literacy programs, or approximately 475,000, are enrolled in ESL courses. The U.S. Department of Education (1991) put this figure at over 1 million in 1989.

Although the increase in non-English-speaking adults has resulted in increases in adult basic education (ABE) and ESL enrollments in adult schools as well as community and library-based programs, very little is known about the literacy levels or literacy potential of the students. The reason for this is that instructional materials, methods, and assessment practices do not directly address the multicultural and multilingual nature of LEP adults. The confusion of oral language proficiency and literacy has resulted in minimal literacy instruction by emphasizing lower ordered oral proficiency skills.

Illiteracy Rate of Limited-English-Speaking Adults Still Unclear

The illiteracy rate among non-English-speaking adults is high. The English Language Proficiency Survey (ELPS) estimated that 7 million of the 17 million nonliterate adults were from homes where a language other than English was spoken (Wiley, 1991). Furthermore, analyses of native language literacy levels show mixed results. A secondary analysis of the National Chicano Survey by Macías (1988) showed that of those people classified as English illiterate (i.e., with less than 6 years of schooling), 35% were literate only in Spanish. Vargas (1986), on the other hand, reported on a study that found only 14% of adults from non-English backgrounds who were illiterate in English were literate in Spanish. The data were based on self-reports.

Finally, the recent National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) found that a high percentage of immigrants (25%) scored at the lower Level I on the English language tasks. The authors of the NALS report suggest that one reason for this finding may be that these immigrants were just learning to speak English (Kirsch et al., 1993). A report to be issued in the spring of 1994 will examine this finding more closely. Because of the lack of reliable and direct measures of literacy assessments for non-English-speaking adults, no reliable estimates of literacy (illiteracy) exist to date for this segment of the population.

Thus, in addition to the need for improved instruction and assessment programs for LEP adults, the problem becomes even more critical because of the growing non-English-speaking population, the resulting increases in our

nation's ESL adult enrollments, and the problems of determining the exact nature and extent of the illiteracy rate of non-English-speaking adults.

Because of the demographic changes taking place in America today, the issue of ESL and/or instruction for LEP adults has gained more prominence, and because of the low literacy levels of many Hispanics, more urgency. This report examines the quality of instruction for LEP adults. Additionally, a discussion of assessment of LEP adult learners is presented that includes a review of promising approaches to alternative assessment for LEP adults.

LEP INSTRUCTION

QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

The examination of the quality of instruction centers on the following points in this report: (a) the distinction between oral language proficiency and literacy development, (b) the role of primary language in the development and acquisition of the second language, (c) inclusion of higher-order cognitive skills instruction in both the first and second language, and (d) the incorporation of meaningful content into the curriculum. In order to provide a rationale for the contention that native language skills can transfer to the second language, a separate section on skills transfer is included.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND ENGLISH LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

The distinction between instruction for English-speaking proficiency and for English literacy is important. That is, English oral proficiency is quite different from English literacy (Macías, 1988; Solórzano, 1993c; Wiley, 1991; Vargas, 1986). Many ESL programs emphasize English-speaking proficiency and, thus, use audio-lingual or communicative approaches and related materials to the exclusion of literacy-based approaches. In many cases, these two elements of LEP instruction get intertwined and used interchangeably, when in fact, they are not the same. Vargas (1986) points out that there are adults who are fluent English speakers yet not literate in English, and likewise, there are those who are literate in English yet not orally fluent.

Ringel and Smith (1989) have also examined the difference between ESL literacy and ESL. They see ESL as using instruction to encourage speaking, listening, and pronunciation. ESL literacy, on the other hand, emphasizes sight word identification and simple phonics activities that help students to improve their English and native language skills.

English oral proficiency can be a goal of adult ESL programs that also emphasize English literacy acquisition. Yet, when teaching LEP adults, ESL programs usually teach the structure of the language and how words are pronounced. Indeed, Crandall, Lerche, and Marchilonis (1984) reviewed adult literacy programs nationwide and found that most ESL programs grouped students by oral language ability. In this kind of program, progress is measured in terms of oral language fluency and not necessarily in terms of

one's ability to process text by reading and/or writing in the second language. Macías (1988) found that where ABE programs were mostly concerned with functional literacy, there was a need for ESL programs to more directly address English literacy issues. The intersection of orality and literacy issues needs to be explored in terms of second language and literacy acquisition.

Consistent with the oral language instructional emphasis is the inclusion of phonetic instruction for LEP adults. Many of the grammar drills and sounding out strategies employed by adult ESL programs come under the phonetic approach rationale, that is, learners simply need to "crack the code" and they will become good readers. Along this line is the audio-lingual method popular in the 1950s and 1960s for its practical language emphasis (Guglielmino & Burrichter, 1984). Alamprese, Keltner, and Savage (1988) also found that early ESL teacher training workshops in California reflected the audio-lingual/habit-formation approach when developing language proficiency. Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education (1991) noted the following: "Most of the approaches to teaching adult ESL classes emphasize *oral language skills*, and focus on language functions, communicative competence, and *grammatical forms or structures*" (Emphasis mine) (p. 20).

Many ESL programs use phonetic approaches to English instruction, which may be adding to the literacy/language acquisition dilemma. For example, studies have shown that poor readers have the perception that reading is a decoding process (Gambrell & Heathington, 1981; Taylor et al., 1980). For LEP adults learning a new language, the wrong message about the "meaning" of reading may be hampering their potential success in the second language. The stakes can be even higher for nonliterate learners. Sakash (1987) points out the general agreement among ESL literacy specialists that the phonetic analysis of words is a highly abstract skill eluding most learners. Furthermore, sounding out words is too slow a strategy for learners who need to read quickly to survive. It is for this reason that early literacy instruction must rely on a whole word approach that "focuses on reading for meaning, gives learners confidence and provides a secure base upon which to build additional word attack skills" (p. 6).

The confusion about English oral language fluency and literacy has led to the use of teaching methodologies that may be inadvertently slowing down the acquisition of English and frustrating eventual literacy development for LEP adult learners.

THE ROLE OF PRIMARY LANGUAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION OF THE SECOND LANGUAGE

Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares (1985) provide a valuable framework for conceptualizing LEP instruction that is transferable to adults and, when modified, acknowledges the role of native language literacy in the second language acquisition process. They suggest that language objectives for various language levels dictate the instructional approach. For example, they describe three levels for English language proficiency: beginning, low intermediate, and high intermediate/advanced. The language objectives for beginning would be social interaction emphasizing communicative instructional approaches involving listening and speaking activities. For low intermediate, the language objectives would be initial literacy using language experience instructional approaches. Finally, for the high intermediate and

advanced learner, the language objectives include the development of academic skills. In this case, a cognitive and/or content-based instructional approach is recommended.

These levels and their associated instructional strategies are outlined in Table 1 (see Appendix). The original table has been modified to include native language proficiency in the LEP instructional sequence, where low-intermediate learners develop initial literacy skills by receiving language experience lessons and high-intermediate/advanced learners develop academic language skills by receiving cognitive instruction in their native language similar to those in the high-intermediate/advanced levels in English.[1] This group also begins English language "sheltered" instruction through total physical response (TPR) methods.

By acknowledging that cognitive skills learned in the native language have high potential to transfer to the second language, one can better conceptualize the language literacy continuum for adults learning two languages (biliteracy). Thus, by modifying the table in this way, native language instruction is put into perspective relative to its place in the English acquisition process.

Table 1 begins ESL instruction with social interactions, which Cummins (1984) refers to as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). Activities that stress listening and speaking are important at this level. Work conducted by Lund (1990) suggests a developmental "taxonomy" for second language listening where instructional activities are guided by a concept of the development of listening proficiency. The author describes one view that emphasizes the use of whole language where students learn by doing and by accumulating authentic experiences with language. The structuring of listening skills relative to the tasks and demands associated with certain spoken conventions (e.g., to comprehend a speaker's gossiping, promising, apologizing), as well as to comprehend the speaker's message, is not well integrated into current ESL instruction.

Hierarchical listening-processing demands can complement similar (higher ordered) text-processing demands in reading. However, the different types of listening skills that can be used for social interaction (column 3 in Table 1) should be structured and demanding and probably meaning based. For example, O'Malley, Chamot, Walker, and Sabol (1987) note that in listening comprehension, formal linguistic rules are not as important as meaning. According to the authors, this is because spoken language is usually delivered one clause at a time, and because of the frequent use of ungrammatical forms in spoken language. One teaching strategy found to be particularly effective for assessing meaning vis-à-vis listening skills (mentioned in column 2) is the total physical response (TPR) method.

Similar to the use of "authentic experiences" in listening instruction, is the use of the language experience approach (LEA) in the native language for beginning learners or second language for low-intermediate learners (Table 1, columns 1 & 4 respectively). The rationale for this instructional approach is that the LEA is considered especially appropriate as a teaching technique for adult ESL students (Appleson, Hammerman, & Isaacson, 1984; Haverson, 1986; Hughes, 1986; Longfield, 1984; Nessel & Dixon, 1983), native language learners (Solórzano, 1991), and as an assessment technique

(Nessel & Dixon, 1983; Wrigley & Guth, 1992). Simich-Dudgeon (1989, quoting Hughes, 1986) notes that the author advocates an approach that uses the student's past experiences, expectations, and language intuitions as the basis for learning written symbols and developing reading comprehension.

Further, Simich-Dudgeon reports on the work of Hamayan and Pfleger (1987), who recommend the LEA for helping the LEP learner make the initial transition from oral, English language to reading and writing because it allows the learner to verbally share meaningful events and stories that are then shaped into written form by the teacher. The Table 1 instructional sequence acknowledges the importance of learners' experiences by recommending the LEA instructional approach at the early stages of literacy development. Furthermore, the LEA strategy is appropriate for both native language learners (column 1) and second language learners (column 4).

INCLUSION OF HIGHER-ORDER COGNITIVE SKILLS INSTRUCTION IN BOTH FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE

Another salient feature of the instructional sequence in Table 1 is the inclusion of cognitive skills-based instruction and LEP learners' native language literacy development, both of which link to instructional objectives and approaches. In the former case, cognitive instruction deals with *context-reduced* (cognitively demanding) language proficiencies rather than *context-embedded* proficiencies where contextual supports are available (Cummins, 1982). In the latter case, the introduction of native language literacy development in the instructional sequence, while recognizing its potential impact on second language literacy development, is a significant factor in placing native language literacy in its proper perspective. In both cases, literacy development includes the teaching of cognitively demanding skills.

Important work is currently being conducted that links cognitive skills and assessment in adult literacy. For example, research based on an analysis of past national adult literacy assessments has suggested that item/task difficulty is related to the content of the task, the structure of the task, and the nature or purpose of the task (Kirsch & Mosenthal, 1990). Reiterating this point in the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) report, Kirsch et al. (1993) further explain:

> Previous research has shown that the difficulty of a literacy task, and therefore its placement on the literacy scale, is determined by three factors: *the structure of the material*—for example, exposition, narrative, table, graph, map, or advertisement; the *content* of the material and/or *context* from which it is drawn—for example, home, work, or community; and *the nature of the task*—that is, what the individual is asked to do with the material, or his or her purpose for using it. (pp. 8-9)

Because of knowledge gained through national adult literacy surveys, researchers are beginning to understand and identify certain cognitive skills associated with task difficulty. By identifying these underlying cognitive skills, instructors can begin to teach them to learners.

Cognitive instruction involves the teaching of text-processing skills associated with common everyday materials. When tasks are related to daily literacy demands placed on adults (demands with which adults have difficulty), it becomes imperative that instruction include these skills. Furthermore, a distinction is made here that during instruction, learners are made aware of the cognitive skills and learning strategies that they use to process text.

The emphasis of cognitive skills instruction is on text-processing demands and their relationship to the structures, content, and nature of the literacy material at hand. Examples of cognitive skills include the following: (a) learners' understanding of the structures of different forms of text; (b) learners' ability to understand the different text-processing demands needed to satisfy a number of conditions and to successfully complete a task from either a document, a prose sample, or a quantitative problem; (c) the ability to match and integrate information from various parts of a text or table and to supply an answer to a question or to generate a hypothesis; and (d) the ability to cycle through information in a text or table format to identify information that satisfies certain task conditions.

The teaching of cognitive skills-based curriculum in either language shows promise for ESL adults because this method addresses literacy acquisition and is not remedial in nature. Furthermore, the cognitive skills learned are directly related to assessment tasks. In this case, however, the purposes of tasks and structures of items are taught along with content. Thus, underlying cognitive skills can be used in different contexts once they are learned and be potentially transferable to a second language. A cognitive skills-based instructional approach for LEP adults would provide for literacy instruction in either English or the learner's native language and is, therefore, appropriately placed in the Table 1 biliteracy sequence.

INCORPORATING CONTENT AND INSTRUCTION

Finally, included in the Table 1 instructional sequence is the notion of content-based instruction. In this case, higher ordered cognitive skills are integrated into a broader, content-based curriculum for both native (column 2) and second language learners (column 5). Popular with the K-12 sector, content-based ESL also has a place in adult instruction, especially in the teaching of second language literacy vis-à-vis subject matter. For example, Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares (1985) point out that content-based approaches focus on the subject matter to be learned, which is often of importance to the students, while language development is almost incidental. Mohan (1979) points out that, on the other hand, in language teaching, the content may be trivial while the language development aspects are stressed.

Content must be specially relevant to the goals and needs of adults. In many cases, instruction centers on commercially published materials or is based on the goals and activities established by these materials or by program staff. These usually include preordained competencies and/or skills that are unrelated to learners' needs or goals. Adults drop out of literacy programs when the instruction is meaningless and irrelevant.

Content-based ESL instruction can be integrated with LEAs that guide the adult from learner-authored texts to texts written by others. By integrating

LEAs with content-based materials, special care must be taken to ensure that learners' experiences and backgrounds are an integral part of instruction.

SKILLS TRANSFER FROM FIRST TO SECOND LANGUAGE

Table 1 suggests a complementary role for the two languages when developing literacy. The assumption is that skills and strategies can transfer from one language to the other (Cummins, 1984). This point is crucial when considering the instructional distinction between oral language proficiency and literacy instruction emphasis and ultimately biliteracy.

The transfer of literacy skills from one language to another has been examined relative to the relationship between test scores in the languages of interest. Examined in this way, one can explore the impact (or predictive power) that native language literacy skills have on second language literacy scores. The suggestion is that there is a positive relationship between native and second language literacy. Learners who have high native language literacy scores will have high second language scores on similar types of tests. Several studies have been documented that support this contention (Cummins, 1984; Mestre & Royer, 1991; Troike, 1978), but, unfortunately, few have been conducted with adults. Several studies are reviewed here to illustrate the nature of this relationship.

One study involving young adults, Angus (1986), compared Spanish pretest scores of Hispanic Navy recruits to an English gain score to see if there was a positive correlation between high Spanish scores and higher English gain scores. The author found only a slight tendency toward greater English gains with higher initial Spanish proficiency. This finding complements Cummins' (1984) theory of the common underlying proficiency where native language literacy development supports second language literacy development, rather than impedes it.

In a study involving fifth graders that shows a direct link between first and second language literacy, Mestre and Royer (1991) reported that the best predictor of English-reading performance was Spanish-reading performance the year before. The authors found that Spanish-reading performance was a better predictor than previous English-reading performance. This led them to conclude that "... the reading skill acquired in Spanish transfers to reading skills in English as the students improved their competence in English" (p. 62).

Several other studies in the K-12 sector have also shown a positive relationship between first and second language test scores (Krashen & Biber, 1988; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991). In general, when controls for program quality and implementation have been secured, much of the research on first language impact on second language acquisition (literacy) provides support for Cummins' common underlying proficiency (CUP) theory. This complementary relationship between the two languages is illustrated in the Table 1 instructional sequence.

In sum, the instructional emphasis for LEP adult learners needs redirecting. Once distinctions have been made between oral fluency and literacy development, the role of native language literacy needs to be taken

into serious consideration. Educators of adults need to keep in mind that language arts skills and strategies learned in the first language can be transferred to the second (Rivera, 1988) and that a curriculum that emphasizes higher ordered thinking skills and cognitively demanding text-processing skills can prepare LEP learners for both oral English language fluency and literacy.

It is important, therefore, to examine and incorporate into the curriculum the skills and literacy strategies that the adult learner brings to the instructional setting. Solórzano (1993c) points out that, like their native English counterparts, ESL learners employ certain strategies, and programs should identify and examine these strategies and possibly incorporate them into their instructional approaches. Phillips (1984) stated:

> Current research in first language reading is applicable to second language reading insofar as the process is concerned. Thus, reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman, Goodman, & Flores, 1979) and as an interactive process between what the reader sees on the page and what is already in the reader's head (Smith, 1982) is as true for the second language reader as for the first language reader. (quoted in Solórzano, 1993a, pp. 17-18)

Inclusion of Writing and Cultural Experiences/Background Instruction

Rarely is writing included in the assessment of learner progress, especially for LEP adults. Wrigley and Guth (1992) reported that holistic writing assessments had not been fully incorporated into an overall framework for the ESL programs that they surveyed.

With the emphasis on oral language development for LEP adults, it is a wonder that writing gets mentioned at all. For LEP adults beginning to improve their literacy skills, a technique that combines writing with reading and oral language development is the language experience approach (LEA). Because the LEA encourages learner-generated text, background experiences can bring cultural relevance to instruction as well.

LEA and LEP Instruction

The language experience approach (LEA) is one teaching method that continually surfaces as particularly relevant to LEP adults (Haverson, 1986; Nessel & Dixon, 1983; Ringel & Smith, 1989). However, there are subtle differences in the method when used with LEP learners to learn a second language. Ringel and Smith (1989) cite the differences between LEA for English-speaking learners and LEA for Spanish-speaking learners:

- conversation in and of itself poses an additional learning challenge which native English-speaking LEA students do not face;
- LEA/ESL incorporates more extensive vocabulary development;

- grammar problems will come up as students try to express themselves in their new language; and
- pronunciation becomes an additional learning aspect in the LEA/ESL technique.

Indeed, the LEA session can be a vehicle to practice oral language use while developing reading and writing skills. While the LEA presents challenges to LEP learners and teachers, yet it is a flexible teaching technique. Teachers and learners can utilize LEA methods in the native language (Solórzano, 1991) or have Spanish oral stories translated into English (D'Annunzio, 1991). This is a strength of the LEA methodology. These two LEA methods can be seen as complementary—LEA for native language speakers in the former case and transitional LEA for second language learners in the latter. Two program examples will help illustrate the relationship of these strategies.

LEA FOR NATIVE LANGUAGE AND TRANSITION

In the first method, native language LEA, (Solórzano, 1991), Spanish-speaking adults generate (write) family stories in Spanish. Learners dictate or write their own stories. Scoring rubrics are developed by bilingual raters who examine writing improvements over time. A holistic criteria for writing performance emphasizes the ability to communicate a message to the reader with minimal attention given to spelling and punctuation.

Assessment in this way becomes direct and amenable to the teaching of higher ordered skills. As Cooper (1984) points out, "... higher level skills appear naturally to be the province of direct assessment and the lower skills the humbler domain of indirect assessment; hence the greater face validity and credibility of essay tests for those who teach English" (p. 2). Furthermore, writing allows the learner to perform the task and demonstrate the cognitive skills associated with it. For example, Frederiksen and Collins (1989) point out:

> Direct tests attempt to evaluate a cognitive skill as it is expressed in the performance of extended tasks. Such measures are systematically valid, because instruction that improves the test score will also have improved performance on the extended task and the expression of the cognitive skill within the task context. (p. 29)

A holistic writing threshold score in the native language signals readiness for second language instruction using similar LEA writing methods, keeping in mind the subtle nuances of LEA for ESL described above by Ringel and Smith (1989).

The improvement of LEP adults' native language writing abilities by using the LEA and the holistic assessment of their writing utilizes a whole-language educational process. Instruction and assessment are linked, and reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities are incorporated into the lessons.

The second method—translating native language dictation into second language strategies—involves a project where Spanish- and Cambodian-

speaking adults tell their stories in their native languages, while bilingual tutors immediately transcribe them into English (D'Annunzio, 1991). Program staff reported that by using this stratagem, they hoped that the students would begin to speak and read in English simultaneously, based on their own dictations from their own native language.

This methodology is potentially advantageous since it acknowledges the dictation of the story in the learners' native language. This is especially appropriate once learners have reached the threshold level in their native language literacy holistic score. For instance, learners having reached a prescribed threshold level in their native language instruction (Table 1, column 2), can combine communicative (column 3) and language experience approaches (column 4) using this instructional strategy. However, for learners with low literacy levels in their native language, this method might be premature without a threshold level of necessary native language skills before beginning any English instruction. This might be an appropriate method for LEP learners who have had some experience with the LEA in their native language. In either case, both approaches mentioned above use writing as a vehicle to teach LEP learners reading, to incorporate learners' background experiences in the lessons, and to provide cultural relevancy in the curriculum.

An important point needs to be made here. Although LEA is a good instructional strategy for LEP adults (especially for beginning readers/writers), writing instruction should be integrated as part of a more comprehensive whole-language curriculum that moves beyond learner-authored texts. For example, Peyton (1991) suggests that the successful writing program for LEP adult literacy learners includes (a) a process approach to writing, (b) conversation as an essential and ongoing part of the writing process, (c) personal experience and the community as resources for material, and (d) a well-developed system for publication. With this in mind, learners will need to write for specific purposes and will need to broaden their scope. Writing in different content areas as well as writing for different purposes, such as a job application, registration forms, and so forth, should be stressed in the LEP adult curriculum.

LEP ASSESSMENT

A U.S. Department of Education study (1991) pointed out that assessment is an area of confusion and controversy in adult ESL programs. Wrigley and Guth (1992) agree and include program evaluation as another troublesome issue. Assessing LEP adults is just as controversial as assessing English-speaking adults with the center of the controversy being the relevance and purpose of the assessment. The relevancy issue concerns the linkages between assessment, instruction, and learners' goals.

The purposes of assessment—especially for LEP learners—can vary. For example, the purpose of assessment could be to (a) diagnose learner weaknesses and strengths in the English language, (b) place learners in an ESL sequential curriculum, (c) assess learners' English listening and/or speaking proficiency, (d) judge competencies in real-life situations, or

(e) satisfy funders' testing requirements. In the latter case, very often programs are required to test learners on skill topics that are not related to program or learner goals, curriculum, or methodologies.

Tests in and of themselves do not necessarily need to be problematic. For example, standardized, criterion-referenced, and diagnostic assessments all serve a purpose. However, in many instances, programs use tests inappropriately (usually unknowingly) or to satisfy outside funders. Nonetheless, the test itself may not be the problem, but rather how it is used.

Types of Tests Used With LEP Adults

Since funders usually play a pivotal role in determining learner outcomes, most adult literacy programs administer some form of standardized test, usually the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), the Adult Basic Learning Exam (ABLE), or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS).

Other tests have been developed especially for LEP adults in ESL programs. For example, the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) assesses speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills of low-proficiency, non-native English speakers. The CASAS Adult Life Skills-Listening Test assesses English listening comprehension in common everyday situations by using a cassette recording that provides instructions and asks questions of the learner. The English as a Second Language Oral Assessment (ESLOA) measures the ability of non-native English speakers to understand and speak English. At the lower levels of the assessment, learners can respond orally or point to the appropriate picture/answer (Sticht, 1990). The New York State Placement Test for English as a Second Language Adult Students (NYSPLACE) tests listening and speaking skills in each of the four levels of New York State's ESL curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 1991). The John Test assesses oral English proficiency based on accuracy of syntactic structure, fluency, and pronunciation using a set of picture cards. The HELP Test assesses adult learners who have minimal or no oral English skills using interviews and picture cards (Guglielmino & Burrichter, 1984). The Basic Inventory of Natural Language (BINL) provides for a grammatical analysis of spoken language samples (Wrigley & Guth, 1992). This latter test, often employed in K-12 situations, uses visual stimuli to elicit responses from the learner. Finally, the Henderson/Moriarty ESL Placement Test is designed to assess literacy and oral skills of both literate and nonliterate adults (Wrigley & Guth, 1992).

Most of these assessments address the English listening and speaking skills of LEP adults. Learners point or answer orally to responses at the lower levels, and at the higher levels, learners use reading skills or sentence structure/grammar proficiency to successfully complete the tasks. Most tests are administered orally or, in some cases, by cassette recording that ask the learner to respond to oral or visual prompts. Rarely do assessments judge native language literacy or *biliteracy* (i.e., ability to read and write in two languages).

CONCERNS WITH LEP ADULT TESTING

Many of the arguments against using standardized testing for measuring the progress of English-speaking adults are also valid for measuring the progress of LEP adults. Again, much depends on the purpose for using the tests. It is difficult to find a single test to assess both accountability (for the funders) and instruction (for the ESL practitioners).

In brief, the concerns for the K-12 as well as the adult sectors are that standardized tests reduce the complexity of language and literacy learning to a set of skills (Wrigley & Guth, 1992) or to trivial subskills such as word recognition, vocabulary, or spelling (BCEL, 1990; Frederiksen & Collins, 1989). Many of the tests were written for children (BCEL, 1990; Lytle et al., 1986). The tests are difficult to use for both program accountability and instructional decision making (Cole, 1988; Sticht, 1990), and there is an incongruency between what programs teach, what learners learn, and what the nationally standardized tests assess (Sticht, 1990).

In addition to these constraints, ESL assessment introduces concerns related to English language knowledge where LEP adults might not do well because they do not have the vocabulary or language usage patterns necessary to complete the items/tasks. In this case, LEP adults may understand the directions and/or question, but not have the vocabulary or language ability to format the answer in acceptable English conventions.

Another potential constraint is that LEP students may lack experiences or background (schema) related to the content of the test. For example, Carrell (1984) reported that *schema theory* (the interaction between the reader's background knowledge and the text) is a vital factor for ESL comprehension. Joag-Dev and Steffensen (1980) found that adults from different cultural backgrounds interpreted the same texts differently. The differences in their interpretations are believed to be based on differences in their backgrounds, which have resulted in their gaining different knowledge structures or schema (Gillis, 1983).

In many cases, programs translate tests from English into the Spanish language. There are problems with this method of assessment. Marin and Marin (1991) point out that the central concern of every translation is to produce the cultural equivalent of an instrument. This is difficult if the English context of the item or task has no non-English language cultural counterpart. Angoff and Cook (1991) sum up this problem during their attempt to translate (English/Spanish) the Prueba de Aptitud Académica (PAA) and the SAT as part of their equating study:

> ...to provide a measuring instrument to make these comparisons, it is clearly insufficient simply to translate the test constructed for one language group into the language of the other, even with the adjustments in the items to conform to the more obvious cultural requirements of the second group. Nuances of expression and subtleties of custom are unwittingly embodied in words and phrases and often have particular meanings for one group but not for the other. (p. 135)

Another potential problem in assessing LEP adults may be with their unfamiliarity with the testing process altogether or the cultural notion

underlying the task (Wrigley & Guth, 1992). Specifically, LEP adults may be unfamiliar with the purposes of the tasks or with the text-processing demands associated with them. This is an important point to consider, especially in light of research that suggests that item/task difficulty is a function of task content, structure, and purpose (Kirsch & Mosenthal, 1990).

Finally, as discussed above, many ESL tests are diagnostic in nature and emphasize listening and speaking. Few, if any, measure writing, higher ordered and/or cognitive skills in either English or the native language. Thus, adult LEP learners are rarely assessed for literacy per se.

Given these concerns about LEP assessment, it is clear that the purpose and relevancy of testing has to be well thought out in programs serving LEP adults, and that tests should not reflect mere translations or modified English versions. As is the case for English-speaking adults, this decision is important to the assessment and instructional process for LEP adults. To the extent possible, items and/or tasks should be in contexts relevant to the LEP adult, content and text structure should be familiar, and the text-processing demands should be consistent with everyday processes encountered by the LEP adult. Although difficult criteria to include in one test, promising examples of meaningful tasks for English-speaking adults, which embodying the above criteria, are contained in the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). To date, no such assessment exists for non-English-speaking adults.

Alternative Forms of Assessment and Promising Practices for LEP Adults

Although standardized tests are still widely used, programs are experimenting with alternative forms of assessment. Alternative assessments are popular with LEP adults because of their flexibility, relevancy to learners' goals and needs, and their direct linkage to instruction. Alternative forms of assessment are discussed below within the context of dialogue and interviews, direct writing assessments, and assessments of cognitive skills.

Assessing Learner Progress Through Dialogue and Interviews

Most programs serving LEP adults use some form of interview to identify needs or to assess literacy progress. For example, in a study of ABE/ESL programs in the state of Washington conducted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the authors reported that teacher-made tests were widely used in ESL programs. Respondents reported using oral questioning techniques to monitor learner progress more than any other technique. This study surveyed thirty-three ESL teachers. Over 80% said that they used oral questioning strategies to monitor ESL learner progress (Davis & Yap, 1992). As one respondent noted: "...ESL student needs were mostly identified through interviews. Their needs were varied and could not be addressed by existing tests." Sticht (1990) also recommends the use of interviews before assessing ESL learners because of the heterogeneity of the learner population.

Generally speaking, alternative assessments for adults need to be participatory (Lytle & Wolfe, 1989) and to include learners' goals and literacy practices as criteria for progress (Solórzano, 1993a). Sticht (1990) probably

sums up best the rationale for this approach in relation to making instructional decisions—in this case for a learner who wants to be able to read a technical manual:

> ... an alternative assessment method is needed, perhaps one in which learners' needs are determined by interviews that include trial readings of technical manual passages. Then, progress checks using reading aloud and question/discussion periods for checking comprehension might be used to indicate learning in the program. (p. 28)

As an alternative form of assessment, Wrigley and Guth (1992) suggest that program-based assessments should actively involve learners in the assessment process by giving them opportunities to (a) discuss their goals and interests in literacy, (b) choose the kind of reading and writing on which they would like to be evaluated, and (c) discuss what they have learned. In their national survey of effective ESL programs, these authors identified the following promising practices in alternative assessments that reflect the interview type of assessment: student-teacher interviews and conferences, portfolios, and questionnaires and surveys.

Interviews monitor changes in literacy practices and increases in the range of literacy materials read. As mentioned above, interviews seem to be the preferred mechanism for addressing ESL progress. Interview type assessments have been used widely for English adult literacy programs as well (Solórzano, 1993a).

Portfolios contain samples of learner progress along with comments on the work done. Keeping samples of learners' work over time with comments by both the learner and teacher can be a very effective means of monitoring progress for individuals. In many cases, learners and teachers (tutors) discuss what goes into the portfolio along with the reasons why. In order to show program level success, the challenge is to devise a systematic way of comparing progress among participants.

According to Wrigley and Guth (1992), questionnaires and surveys probe the reactions of stakeholders, such as employers, representatives from the learner's community, or family members, to the learner's progress. Questionnaires can also be used directly with the learner. For example, Guglielmino and Burrichter (1984) studied ESL programs in Florida and found that when they used informal progress tests, teachers could encourage students to assess their own language growth by giving the students lists of questions which they then answered about their own language abilities. Although much of this information is useful for showing changes in learners' perceptions of their progress, it remains the learners' perception, and thus is subjective. However, if the purpose of the assessment is to provide this type of information for needs assessment or individual progress, then this is an appropriate method.

Holt (1992) identified surveys and interviews as well in a comprehensive review of effective alternative assessment approaches for Family English Literacy Programs—a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). According to the report, surveys are used to obtain general information about progress while interviews are designed to collect detailed

information. In either case, these approaches necessitate a dialogue or interview depending on whether the questions are open-ended or close-ended. Surveys and interviews can ask learners about their perceptions of their literacy levels (both native and second language), their past education history, or their participation in literacy activities with their children at home.

Learner participation through dialogue and interviews has been found to be an important component in LEP progress evaluation. However, when using these methods, one still needs to determine the purpose of assessment for LEP learners (e.g., oral production, writing skills, reading skills, needs assessment, literacy practices, and/or learners' perceptions of progress).

DIRECT ASSESSMENT OF WRITING FOR LEP LEARNERS

Viewed as a direct assessment, this process involves the evaluation of actual writing samples, as contrasted to indirect measures that use a multiple-choice response format. Describing writing as part of an alternative assessment related to performance samples, Gelardi (1992) points out that

> ...a writing sample can provide valid, authentic representations of learners' progress in attaining project objectives. Because they can be linked directly to project activities, writing samples become natural extensions of the instructional process. Learners can produce writing samples in English or their native language. (p. 92)

The direct assessment is considered superior to other methods because of its link to instruction and its authenticity to real-life tasks (Frederiksen & Collins, 1989).

Since writing is not emphasized in many adult ESL classrooms, it is rarely assessed. Again, the choice between literacy instruction and oral language instruction determines the teaching and assessment method(s). As discussed earlier in this report, LEA instructional strategies are popular with LEP adults, yet systematic methods for assessing LEP adults' writing have not been fully developed. Furthermore, like reading, learners write for different purposes (e.g., complete forms, applications, narrative, persuasion, etc.), and little mention is made in the literature of attempts to assess these forms of writing for LEP adults.

Gelardi (1992) describes one writing assessment instrument discussed by Soifer et al. (1990) that is recommended for use with LEP adults. It includes three writing areas: (a) authenticity/voice/engagement of the reader, (b) focus/organization/development, and (c) sentence mechanics/language. A four point scale determines the level of proficiency in each of these areas. Writing samples can be produced in either English or Spanish.

One project (Solórzano, 1993b) attempted to assess Spanish writing samples of LEP adults as part of a LEA instructional strategy. Adults received LEA instruction in their native language and their writing samples were used as the basis for direct assessment. The LEA approach used as an instructional technique for LEP adults was found to be useful for Spanish-speaking learners in that the techniques could be used in the Spanish language. Secondly, a direct (authentic) assessment of writing was conducted using

"real" samples of writing in context. In this case, Spanish writing prompts were developed along with a holistic rubric to score the writing samples.

Although both writing assessment techniques described above show promise for teaching and assessing the writing of LEP adults, several issues surface relative to this procedure that are worth mentioning.

- *Whatever type of rubric is used, it needs to consider "code-switching."* Learners may substitute words or phrases from one language to the other. With Spanish writing samples, learners might insert an English word or phrase. The extent to which these additions distort meaning or add to it, needs to be addressed in the rubric.
- *Spanish-speaking raters are necessary, and bilingual raters desirable.* Spanish writing samples need to be rated by readers who can understand Spanish. This is rather straightforward. In the cases of "code-switching," bilingual readers are in a better position to detect the context more readily.
- *In cases where a holistic rubric is being used, grammar and punctuation need to be addressed relative to their impact on the "meaning" of the sample.* Raters have to determine if sentences are awkward because of poor language usage or whether the meaning of the passage was incomprehensible because of other grammatical errors. This is particularly true for Spanish speakers attempting to write in the second language (i.e., English).
- *For transitional language programs, a threshold level in native language writing scores needs to be established that recommends the introduction to English writing.* Programs need to explore the possibility of recommending that learners begin English writing after receiving a specific native language holistic writing score (e.g., 4, with 6 being highest).

The evaluation of LEP adults' native language writing abilities using the LEA or other writing process coupled with the holistic assessment of these writings, provides a whole-language educational perspective. Instruction and assessment are linked, and reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities are incorporated into the lessons. Furthermore, the development and scoring process does not compromise the ability to rate writing samples in the Spanish language, thus verifying its relevance and position in the Table 1 biliteracy instructional sequence.

ASSESSING COGNITIVE SKILLS AND CONTENT-BASED LEARNING

The issue of cognitive skills instruction was raised earlier in this report. It was noted that this type of instruction differs from traditional methods in that it makes learners aware of the cognitive strategies being used or needed to process text from various domains or content areas. Further, it helps learners identify the various structures and contents of text. Relative to assessment, learners focus in on the purpose of the task at hand. When teaching cognitive skills and strategies in this manner, the structure and content of the text is

important as well as the purpose or processing demands needed to successfully complete a particular task.

An emphasis on cognitive skills instruction and assessment can be integrated with ESL learner-centered approaches. For example, Wrigley (1992) defines a learner-centered approach to ESL literacy as

> ...supporting language minority adults with little English and little formal education in their efforts to understand and use English in its many forms (oral and written, including prose, document, and quantitative literacy), in a variety of contexts (family, community, school, work), so that they can reach their fullest potential and achieve their own goals (personal, professional, academic). (p. 59)

In a study involving ESL and ABE adults, Solórzano (1993b) developed instructional modules that replicated prose and document literacy tasks. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact that cognitive skills-based instruction had on the literacy levels of ABE and ESL adult learners. Over thirty instructional modules were developed and integrated into two of the three NALS literacy domains—document and prose.

Assessment was conducted by pretesting and posttesting adults using the Test of Applied Literacy Skills (TALS), a test that includes prose, document, and quantitative tasks. Although the results of the study are not due until next year, curricula were successfully developed and implemented in ABE and ESL classrooms that replicated the underlying cognitive skills associated with the TALS.

This study attempted to link assessment (TALS) and curriculum (30 prose/document literacy modules) in an unusual way for both ABE and ESL learners. However, the assessment and curriculum did not address the issue of native language literacy. In fact, ESL learners needed to be at a high enough English level to take the English TALS test. This is not to say that the modules could not be adapted and translated into Spanish. However, this leaves the issue of assessment in the native language unresolved. Currently, there are no adult literacy assessments that address these issues for LEP adults. However, the TALS and associated tasks related to the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) show promise for LEP adults.

For example, the literacy definition guiding the NALS (and TALS development) study is generic and meaningful to LEP adult literacy. The definition is "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." As a result of this definition of literacy, three literacy scales were used (prose, document, and quantitative) and the assessment included open-ended simulation tasks and tasks that measured a broad range of information-processing skills and covered a wide variety of contexts.

These same parameters are useful to LEP adult assessment also. Literacy areas should include prose, document, and quantitative tasks. One variation for LEP adults might include the use of listening and writing assessment as well. The tasks should reflect real-life text-processing demands. Structures and content of the text should reflect formats found in adults' everyday lives. Responses to tasks should be varied (e.g., writing the answer in the

appropriate location), in contrast to traditional multiple-choice response formats. Additional instruction and assessment issues to bear in mind with this type of assessment as it pertains to LEP adults are presented below.

- As mentioned in an earlier study (Solórzano, 1993b), instructional modules could be translated into Spanish to determine if cognitive skills are transferable between languages. The English version of the instructional modules holds great promise for native language instruction—in this case, Spanish. High intermediate (refer to Table 1, column 2) Spanish-speaking adults could receive instruction using these cognitive skills-based instructional modules. After a particular threshold has been met, they could transfer to the English version of these modules. The degree to which skills transfer to the second language, the speed in which this transfer takes place, and the level at which that learners arrive after the transfer from native to second language could be examined.
- A version of the TALS test could be developed in the second language (in this case Spanish) to assess native language literacy using similar metrics as the current assessment. This type of assessment would give information on native language literacy while at the same time determining literacy in the second language. Researchers could conduct equivalency studies between the English and Spanish versions to ultimately assess the level of biliteracy for adult learners. Special attention to translation and contextual issues should be kept in mind during this development.

Generally speaking, assessment of LEP adults has been limited to their listening and speaking ability. The instructional distinction made earlier about language literacy and language proficiency is reflected in these assessments since most of them tested oral language proficiency. Furthermore, instruction and assessment are not linked in any consistent manner. Perhaps this is why alternative assessments such as interviews and the LEA are so popular in that they evaluate literacy acquisition vis-à-vis writing, reading, and changes in literacy practices and are tied directly to instruction. Additionally, assessments in the various content areas that measure cognitive skills in the learners' native language would be appropriate for LEP adults as well.

CONCLUSIONS

The instruction and assessment topics described above address important issues in LEP adult literacy: writing and cognitive skills-based instruction. For writing, the literature is clear that LEAs are appropriate and relevant to LEP adult learners, and yet a more systematic way to assess the writing samples is needed. Scoring rubrics containing holistic criteria seem appropriate for LEP adults. Writing should also be included in the content areas, represent various contexts, and be related to learner needs and goals.

Cognitive skills-based instruction and assessment address the issue of LEP literacy while linking instruction and assessment. In one project (Solórzano, 1993b), modules were developed in English and taught in ABE and advanced ESL classrooms. These modules showed promise for English literacy and, if translated, for Spanish (or native language) literacy as well. The development of cognitive-demanding skills in the native language can have positive effects on second language acquisition. The transference of skills from one language to the other could make English literacy acquisition, a major goal of current ESL programs, quicker and more comprehensive.

As increasing numbers of LEP adults enter our literacy service delivery arenas, providers need to recognize and take advantage of the literacy strengths of these adults by identifying relevant and challenging materials and by linking appropriate assessments to those materials. By teaching for and emphasizing *literacy* rather than *oral language proficiency*, LEP adults will be better able to cope with the ever increasing literacy demands of society in either language. When the state governors (including then-Governor Clinton) met in Charlottesville, Virginia for the historic education summit to discuss our nation's education goals for the future, they proposed a challenge:

> By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The fruits and joys of realizing this goal are as real for non-English-speaking, literate adults as they are for English-speaking, literate adults. Literacy in any language demonstrates the presence of a certain set of knowledge and skills. A literate (especially biliterate) adult can better compete in a global economy, especially a multicultural one. A literate adult can exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. A literate adult is better prepared to become literate in a second language. Literacy is indeed a powerful tool that can facilitate the acquisition of other languages, bridge cultural barriers, and unite diverse thoughts and opinions. Literacy in any language, when viewed as a tool, can help America realize its education dreams for the year 2000.

ENDNOTES

[1] Table 1 was modified by the author to include the native language literacy components.

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